

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TAIPEI 05062 020925Z
ACTION EA-12

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P 020922Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8407

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E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS : SCUL, TW
SUBJECT : PROBLEMS OF VISITORS FROM WILLIAM PATTERSON
COLLEGE, N.J., TO INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL
COLLEGE, KAOHSIUNG

REF : (A) STATE 192373, (B) STATE 187988

1. EMBASSY HAS REVIEWED AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON INCIDENT INVOLVING STUDENTS AND FACULTY MEMBERS FROM WILLIAM PATTERSON COLLEGE (WPC) AND QUESTION OF ALLEGED HARASSMENT OF THIS GROUP WHILE IN ROC. WHILE EMBASSY DOES NOT WISH TO MINIMIZE DISCOMFORT AS PERCEIVED BY GROUP, THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN UNFORTUNATE OVERREACTION TO SOME PRESSURES OF TRAVEL AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES RESULTING FROM LACK OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN GROUP'S LEADERS AND HOTEL AND AIRLINE PERSONNEL. THIS SITUATION MAY HAVE BEEN AGGRAVATED BY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WPC OFFICIALS AND KINGSBURY COLLEGE OFFICIALS WHILE ON TAIWAN; HOWEVER, EMBASSY DOES NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO COMMENT ON THIS ASPECT.

2. EMBASSY IS UNCERTAIN WHETHER FINANCIAL AGREEMENTS
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PAGE 02 TAIPEI 05062 020925Z

CONCERNING PROPOSED EXCHANGE ARE RECIPROCAL AND IF GROC IS INVOLVED IN FINANCIAL ASPECT. THE ONLY ASPECT OF THE ICC GROUP'S BEHAVIOR WHICH THE EXPERIENCE OF WPC STUDENTS (AS REVEALED TO EMBASSY) SHOWED TO BE A PROBLEM IN KAOHSIUNG WAS THE PROPENSITY OF THE CHINESE STUDENTS AND FACULTY TO VOICE ANTI-COMMUNIST AND ANTI-NORMALIZATION OPINIONS.

THE PREDICTABILITY OF SIMILAR BEHAVIOR IN THE
U.S. COULD HAVE DIRECT NEGATIVE BEARING ON VISIT
OF ROC STUDENTS TO WPC.

3. WE UNDERSTAND THAT CHINESE EDUCATIONAL FIGURES
ASSOCIATED WITH KAOHSIUNG ICC, FOR THEIR PART, WERE
SUFFICIENTLY UPSET OVER PROBLEMS THEY HAD IN
RELATIONS WITH THE WPC GROUP THAT THE SAME CHINESE
OFFICIALS ADVOCATED SENDING A LETTER OF PROTEST
TO WPC OFFICIALS AND N.J. EDUCATION AUTHORITIES.
THIS MOVE WAS OPPOSED BY A MR. JOEL CARVER (AFFILIATION
UNCERTAIN, BUT BELIEVED TO BE A PART OF CONSORTIUM
INCLUDING KINGSBURY COLLEGE WHICH HELPED FINANCE
WPC STUDENTS) WHO FEARED THAT SUCH A REPRIMAND WOULD
DESTROY THE EXCHANGE PROGRAM.

4. ICC IS A LOCALLY ACCREDITED SCHOOL AND ITS STUDENTS
WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR VISAS UNDER REGULAR EXCHANGE
PROGRAMS. AS PROPOSED EXCHANGE WITH WPC WOULD ONLY
LAST SEVERAL WEEKS, CHINESE STUDENTS CANNOT
OBTAIN CUSTOMARY STUDENT PASSPORTS FROM GROC OR
STUDENT VISAS FROM EMBASSY. EMB CONS INFORMED WPC
BY LETTER THAT B-2 VISAS COULD BE ISSUED TO PERMIT
STUDENTS TO TAKE PART IN SUMMER EXCHANGE PROGRAM IF
APPROPRIATE GUARANTEES WERE OFFERED TO INSURE THAT
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PAGE 03 TAIPEI 05062 020925Z

ICC STUDENTS WOULD RETURN TO TAIWAN AT COMPLETION OF
SUMMER PROGRAM. TO DATE NO GROUP FROM ICC
HAS APPLIED FOR OR BEEN ISSUED VISAS.

5. EMBASSY FEELS IT IS IMPROPER FOR USG TO BE REQUESTED
TO ADVISE ON BEST COURSE OF ACTION FOR PRIVATE
INSTITUTIONS, AND IS RELUCTANT TO COMMENT BASED ON
LIMITED INFORMATION AVAILABLE. THERE DO NOT APPEAR
TO BE ANY COMPELLING REASONS TO RECOMMEND ANY CHANGES
IN PLANNED UPCOMING VISIT OF CHINESE STUDENTS AND
FACULTY TO WPC AS RESULT OF PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED ON
TAIWAN, HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT SUCCESS OF ICC
VISIT IN U.S. WILL DEPEND ON PERSONALITIES AND
MATURITY OF BOTH MEMBERS OF GROUP AND HOSTS, WHICH
EMBASSY IS NOT IN A POSITION TO ASSESS. IF THE
AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS HAVE FACTUAL QUESTIONS, THE
ANSWERS TO WHICH WOULD HAVE A BEARING ON THEIR
PROCEEDING WITH THE PROGRAM, WE SHALL ATTEMPT
TO ANSWER THEM. UNGER

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